

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>22 MARCH 2010</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON THE ACTION PLAN RELATING TO THE HEREFORDSHIRE TRAVELLERS' POLICY</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>Assistant Director (Environment and Culture)</b>

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

1. To consider progress on the actions arising from the review of the Herefordshire Travellers' Policy adopted on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

### **Financial Implications**

2. None arising from this report

### **Background**

3. The Environment Scrutiny Committee appointed a Group to look at the Herefordshire Travellers' Policy. The Group reported back to Committee with their findings on 31 March 2008 and the resultant report was forwarded to the Executive for consideration.
4. The report detailing the work carried out by the Environment Scrutiny Committee's Review Group during 2007/08 on the draft Travellers Policy was considered by the Cabinet Member (Environment and Strategic Housing) on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The recommendations contained in the report were approved and the draft Travellers' Policy adopted. An action plan was drawn up and was considered by Committee at its meeting on 8 June 2009. This report provides the required further update against the action plan.

### **Progress of Actions**

5. The following table shows the actions, progress and responsibility as at 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010.

	Action	Progress/Action	Responsibility
(i)	the site at Stoney Street, Madley remain available for use until a more favourable site is secured	The site remains available. Work has commenced to cost the redevelopment of the Stoney Street site into a ten pitch permanent residential site. This site was built as a 17 pitch site and only ever used	Environmental Health & Trading Standards (EHTS)/ Property/

		as a transit/semi-permanent site. Finding alternative sites continues.	Housing
(ii)	ongoing work to secure the redevelopment of Open Fields, Linton, Bromyard, be progressed as quickly as practicable	There has been no progress with respect to negotiations between a prospective developer and officers which would have, if successful, secured the redevelopment of the Open Fields Caravan Site.	EHTS/ Property/ Regeneration
(iii)	further officer time be invested in the review of licence agreements	This has been recognised.  These issues are being considered by the Housing needs of Gypsy & Travellers Working Group (GTWG). The group is currently pulling together information identified within the G & T Accommodation Assessment 2008, on current provision to ensure that there is clear understanding of what exists at present and where it is located. This will provide a baseline position to enable the monitoring of delivering the additional pitches required within the assessment. Development of sites is dependant on available land resource and forward planning are looking to identify possible sites for pitch provision through a call for sites.  Members of this group also represent Herefordshire on the sub regional G&T working group which has been established to share resources, best practice and experiences and monitor the delivery of the assessment.	EHTS/ Strategic Housing/ Legal
(iv)	it be recognised that in the future there will be increased pressures to identify and provide more Traveller sites in Herefordshire	This has been recognised.  These issues are being considered by the Gypsy & Travellers Working Group (GTWG) The group is currently pulling together information on current provision to ensure that there is clear understanding of what exists at present and where it is located. This should assist in identifying geographic need within the County. Development of sites is dependant on available land resource and forward planning are looking to identify possible sites for pitch provision.	EHTS/ GTWG/ Planning

(v)	a protocol with the West Mercia Police be agreed that clarifies responsibilities & duties primarily in the event of unauthorised encampments	Officers have met and discussed the proposed protocol with a representative of the West Mercia Police. A draft protocol has been produced and is with the Police for any further comments. We hope to have the protocol signed off for 1 <sup>st</sup> May.	EHTS
(vi)	it be recognised that there is a role for elected Members (via the Environment Scrutiny Committee) in the ongoing development of policy relating to Travellers	This has been recognised.  The further development and review of the Policy would be better done by a specific working group, meeting annually, and consisting of officers and elected members. The Group currently consists of Cllrs: T Hunt; P Morgan; WLS Bowen and PJ Edwards.	EHTS

## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT: (1) the report be noted, and**

**(2) should the Committee consider it necessary a further update report on progress against the actions be included in the Committee work programme, and**

**(3) the Committee consider nominating three members to sit on a group that will meet before November 2010 to carry out a further review the Policy with particular emphasis on its development with a report on its findings being made to a subsequent meeting of the Committee.**

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None